

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 9550

FROM YOUNG,MOOSE AND MCHENRY

FROM USDEL

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, WA, SA, US
SUBJECT: LAGOS CONFERENCE: CONVERSATION WITH SAM NUJOMA

1. SUMMARY: TALKS BETWEEN US AND SWAPO TUESDAY NIGHT (AUGUST 23) CENTERED ON WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS FROM NAMIBIA THE POWERS OF THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE, AND SWAPO'S CONTINUE FEARS ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S "MASSIVE" ASSISTANCE TO TURNHALLE AND ESTABLISHMENT OF ETHNICALLY-BASED MILITARY FORCES IN THE TERRITORY. WE BELIEVE THE FIVE MUST CONVEY TO THE
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SAG IN MUCH STRONGER TERMS THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH WE REGARD THESE SAG ACTIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. YOUNG, MOOSE, MCHENRY AND PETTERSON MET WITH SAM NUJOMA AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF HIS ENTOURAGE LAST NIGHT. AFTER NUMOMA HAD SAID THAT THE U.S. PRESENCE AT THE LAGOS CONFERENCE IS "VERY ENCOURAGING," YOUNG GAVE BACKGROUND OF OUR UPCOMING TRIP TO

LUSAKA AND POSSIBLY POINTS SOUTH FROM THERE. HE DREW A PARALLEL BETWEEN HOW WE MIGHT DEAL WITH THE RHODESIAN ARMY (UN AND UK RESTRAINTS AND A PHASED REDUCTION OF TROOP STRENGTH) AND THE TENTATIVE PLAN FOR A PHASED WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS FROM NAMIBIA. HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE DANGER OF A RESORT TO INTERNAL SOLUTIONS IN BOTH RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA AND THE CONSEQUENT NEED TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM TOWARD SETTLEMENT.

3. IN RESPONSE TO NUJOMA'S QUESTION ABOUT THE USG REACTION TO THE TALKS BETWEEN SWAPO AND THE FIVE IN NEW YORK, MCHENRY SAID IN GENERAL WE WERE ENCOURAGED. HOWEVER WE REMAIN CONCERNED ABOUT THE WITHDRAWAL ISSUE. SWAPO'S TIMETABLE WILL BE FLATLY REJECTED BY SOUTH AFRICA. WE BELIEVE THAT SOMETHING CLOSER TO EIGHT MONTHS RATHER THAN SWAPO'S PROPOSAL FOR THREE MONTHS IS NEEDED, ALTHOUGH EVEN THIS MIGHT NOT WASH WITH VORSTER. WE WILL CONSULT, DO SOME MORE WORK AND TRY TO DEVELOP "SOME KIND OF MIDDLE GROUND" TO MEET SWAPO'S CONCERNS YET AT THE SAME TIME PROVIDE VORSTER WITH THE FACE SAVING HE MUST HAVE. THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF AT LEAST A TOKEN FORCE OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS WOULD BE IMPORTANT IF WE ARE TO GET VORSTER TO GO ALONG. BEARING THESE IDEAS IN MIND, WE ASK THAT SWAPO ALSO LOOK AT THIS QUESTION AGAIN.

4. NUJOMA REPLIED THAT SWAPO IS WILLING TO GIVE SOUTH AFRICA MORE TIME TO REMOVE THEIR MILITARY FORCES AND EQUIPMENT; THEY DO NOT INSIST IT BE DONE IN THREE MONTHS. THE ESSENTIAL POINT
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IS THAT THE SA ARMY MUST LEAVE NAMIBIA. SWAPO WAS READY TO LOOK AT "OTHER KINDS OF PROPOSALS" ON THIS MATTER.

5. IN FURTHER DISCUSSION OF WITHDRAWAL, WE STRESSED THAT THE KEY WAS NOT SO MUCH THAT SO MANY TROOPS LEAVE BY SUCH AND SUCH A TIME, BUT THAT THE UN FORCE BE IN PLACE AND OF A SIZE ADEQUATE ENOUGH TO ENSURE THAT THE ELECTORAL PROCESS CAN PROCEED WITHOUT ANY INTERFERENCE OR INTIMIDATION BY THE ARMY OR FROM ANY OTHER QUARTER. NUJOMA, HOWEVER, MAINTAINED THE POSITION SWAPO HAD TAKEN AT NEW YORK THAT THE SA TROOPS WERE REGARDED BY THE NAMIBIAN PEOPLE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF OPPRESSION. IN THE WITHDRAWAL PROCESS, THOSE REMAINING IN NAMIBIA MUST BE CONFINED TO THE SOUTHERMOST PART OF THE TERRITORY.

6. YOUNG SAID, AFTER IT HAD BEEN NOTED THAT UN CONTINGENCY PLANNING HAD BEGUN, THAT THE UN, NOT THE FIVE, SHOULD WORK OUT THE DETAILS OF THE WITHDRAWAL AND OTHER ASPECTS OF THE TRANSITION. THE U.S. WOULD USE ITS STRENGTH TO TRY TO GET SOUTH AFRICA TO ACCEPT THE PLANS DEVELOPED BY THE UN.

7. NUJOMA SAID SWAPO IS READY TO RETURN TO NAMIBIA, PROVIDED THEY CAN BE SURE THE UN WOULD BE THERE AND ABLE TO "CREATE A

CLIMATE OF PEACE BETWEEN THE RACES." RIGHT NOW, HOWEVER, VORSTER IS TAKING ACTIONS THAT BREED GREATER DISTRUST OF THE SAG. NUJOMA AND HIS COLLEAGUES REPEATED THE FEARS THEY HAD EXPRESSED IN NEW YORK ABOUT THE ESTABLISHMENT AND TRAINING OF MILITARY FORCES FOR THE VARIOUS ETHNIC GROUPS, AND THE MONEY AND OTHER FORMS OF AID THEY ARE GIVING TO TURNHALLE REPRESENTATIVES FOR THE LATTER'S EFFORTS TO BUILD ELECTORAL SUPPORT. WE OBSERVED THAT WE TOO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE DEVELOPMENTS, AND THAT THE FIVE HAD CONVEYED THIS SHARED CONCERN TO THE SOUTH AFRICANS. WE EMPHASIZED THAT SOUTH AFRICA'S MANEUVERING UNDERSCORES THE NEED TO MOVE QUICKLY TO GET THE UN PRESENCE ESTABLISHED IN NAMIBIA.

8. MCHENRY SAID THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER PROBLEM STEMMING FROM
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THE NEW YORK TALKS. WE STILL NEED A MUCH GREATER DEGREE OF AGREEMENT ON TERMINOLOGY THAT WILL MEET SWAPO'S NEEDS AND, AT THE SAME TIME, "NOT DEPRIVE VORSTER OF HIS FIG LEAF." FOR EXAMPLE SWAPO'S INSISTENCE THAT EVERY ACTION OF THE ADMINISTRATOR-GENERAL BE "APPROVED" BY THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE WAS TOO STRONG FOR VORSTER TO STOMACH. WE STILL BELIEVE THE FORMULATION "THE UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE MUST SATISFY HIMSELF AT EVERY STAGE OF THE PROCESS" IS SUFFICIENT. AS WE HAD SAID BEFORE, IT IS NOT WORDS THAT ARE IMPORTANT, BUT THE REALITIES THAT ARE EMBODIED IN AN AGREED PLAN FOR A SETTLEMENT.

9. NUJOMA DID NOT DISAGREE. HE SAID THAT THE POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ARE OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO SWAPO. IF THESE ARE SATISFACTORY, "THEN THE TERMINOLOGY BECOMES OF NO REAL IMPORTANCE."

10. COMMENT: NUJOMA AND COMPANY APPEARED SLIGHTLY MORE FLEXIBLE THAN THEY DID IN NEW YORK BUT THEIR DISTRUST OF THE SAG AND THEIR FEARS CONTINUE TO MOUNT AS THEY RECEIVE MORE EVIDENCE REGARDING AID TO TURNHALLE AND THE BUILDUP OF INDIGENOUS FORCES BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY. WE BELIEVE WE MUST NOT LOSE ANY TIME IN CAPITALIZING AS MUCH AS WE CAN ON ANY WILLINGNESS SWAPO MAY HAVE TO BACK AWAY FROM RIGIDLY HELD POSITIONS. ANY SUCCESS WE MIGHT HAVE ON THIS WILL BE JEOPARDIZED BY THE GAME VORSTER IS PLAYING IN NAMIBIA. THE FIVE'S REMONSTRANCES TO THE SAG ABOUT THEIR ASSISTANCE TO TURNHALLE AND THE ETHNICALLY-BASED FORCES HAVE, IN OUR VIEW, BEEN TEPID. WE WOULD LIKE TO RESTATE OUR BELIEF THAT THE FIVE MUST MAKE A STRONG DEMARCHE ON THIS MATTER AND WE ASK THE DEPARTMENT'S SUPPORT.
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